

# ABOUT THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



## DISASTER

It strikes anytime, anywhere. It takes many forms—a hurricane, an earthquake, a tornado . . . a flood, a fire or a hazardous spill . . . an act of nature or an act of terrorism. It builds over days or weeks, or hits suddenly, without warning. Every year, millions of Americans face disaster, and its terrifying consequences. FEMA helps.

## THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEMA is an independent agency of the federal government, reporting to the President. Since its founding in 1979, FEMA's mission has been clear: *to reduce loss of life and property and protect our nation's critical infrastructure from all types of hazards, through a comprehensive, risk-based emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.* Before, during and after a major disaster occurs, FEMA is there, ready to help.

## VISION

- An informed public protecting their families, homes, workplaces, communities, and livelihoods from the impact of disasters.
- Communities built to withstand the natural hazards which threaten them.
- Governmental and private organizations with plans, resources, and rigorous training and exercising for disaster response.
- Community plans, prepared in advance, for recovery and reconstruction after a disaster.

## MISSION RELATED GOALS

- Emergency management partnerships.
- An emergency management risk-based system firmly established on an all-hazards approach.
- Hazard mitigation as the foundation of the national emergency management system.
- Rapid and effective response to disasters.
- A strengthening of state and local emergency management.

## STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

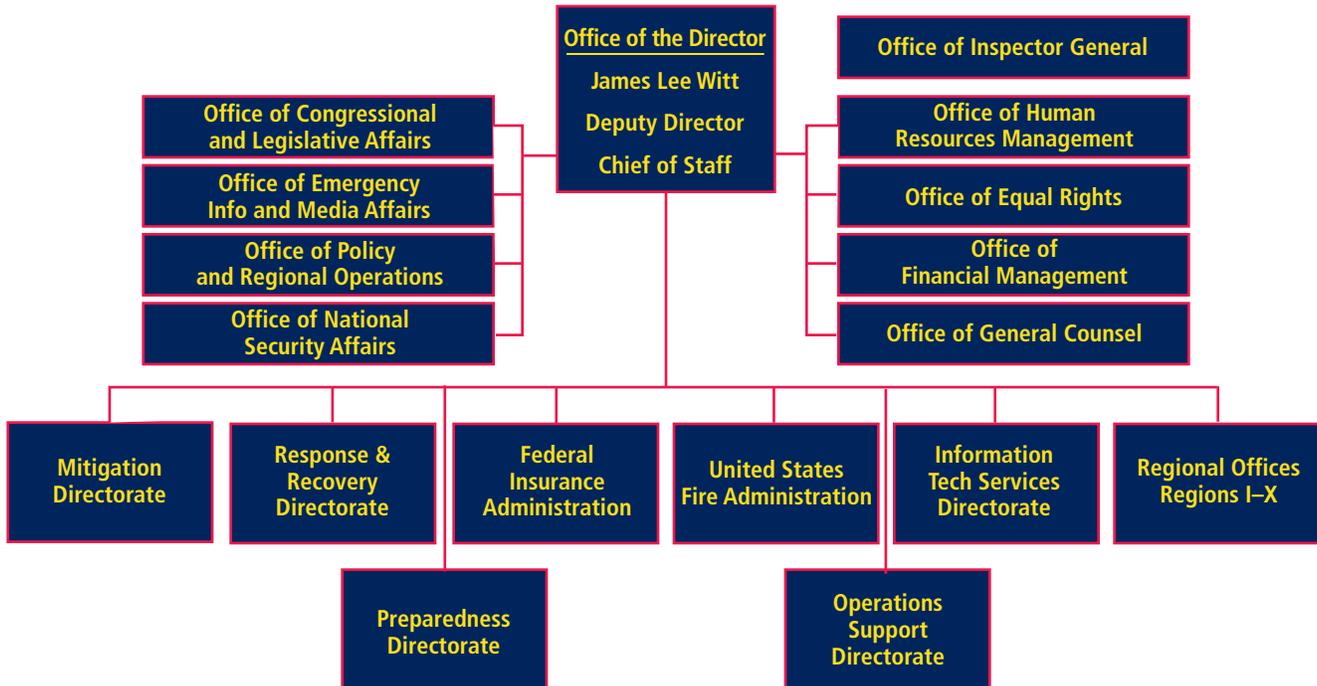
- Protect lives and prevent the loss of property from all hazards.
- Reduce human suffering and enhance the recovery of communities after disaster strikes.
- Ensure that the public is served in a timely and efficient manner.

## THE PEOPLE OF FEMA

FEMA has more than 2,900 full-time permanent and temporary employees working at FEMA headquarters in Washington, DC, at regional and area offices across the country, at the Mount Weather Emergency Assistance Center in Virginia, and at the National Emergency Training Center in Maryland. In a major disaster, as many as 4,000 temporary and reserve employees, other federal agency personnel, and volunteers may join the response and recovery team.

## HOW WE ARE ORGANIZED

FEMA's organizational structure mirrors the functions that take place in the life cycle of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, and response and recovery. FEMA also contains the U.S. Fire Administration which supports the nation's fire service, and the Federal Insurance Administration which provides flood insurance to property owners nationwide.



## RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

When it becomes clear that a hurricane or other potentially catastrophic disaster is about to occur, FEMA moves quickly. Equipment, supplies and people are pre-positioned in areas likely to be affected. That way, response can begin without delay.

Whenever a disaster strikes with such force that local and state resources are overwhelmed, a state may ask the President for federal assistance. This help is available from a special fund set up by Congress under the Robert T. Stafford Act. In a presidentially-declared disaster, FEMA helps by:

FEMA PHOTO BY WILLIAM E. RECKER



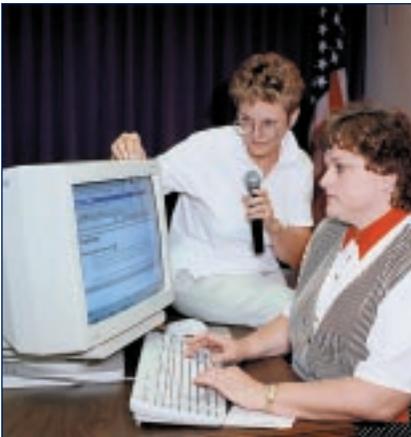
Tornadoes struck Moore, OK in May 1999, causing terrible damage.

FEMA PHOTO BY SHAWN CHADWICK



Elevation is one mitigation measure that reduces flooding risk.

FEMA PHOTO BY WILLIAM E. RECKER



Individual training helps prepare FEMA staff to meet needs of FEMA customers.

- Assessing the damage and deciding what assistance is needed;
- Making disaster aid available and managing the application, approval, and disbursement process;
- Creating and staffing federal/state disaster field offices and coordinating other federal agencies' involvement under the Federal Response Plan;
- Keeping the public informed through a FEMA-published newspaper, *The Recovery Times*, through Internet postings, and through up to 24-hour-a-day broadcasts on *The Recovery Channel* and the *FEMA Radio Network*; and
- Identifying opportunities to mitigate future disasters.

### MITIGATION

With the goal of reducing the effect of natural disasters on our families, homes, communities, and economy, mitigation is the cornerstone of emergency management. FEMA works with state and local governments, professional groups, and the public to reduce or eliminate the risk to people and property from floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other hazards. FEMA helps by:

- Building a Disaster Resistant Community through *Project Impact*, a collaborative, grass-roots initiative involving risk assessment, planning, and implementing prevention measures;
- Promoting the adoption and enforcement of sound building codes and construction practices;
- Providing grants for activities that reduce the impact of earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters, such as seismic retrofitting, building elevation or acquisition/demolition, and hurricane shutters;
- Preparing risk assessment maps to assist local planners with effective community planning and to inform property owners of the degree of risk associated with their property's location;
- Helping local communities adopt floodplain management ordinances; and
- Educating the public on what they can do to reduce damages from natural hazards through training programs, publications, the FEMA Web site, and seminars.

### PREPAREDNESS, TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Survival and quick recovery from disaster depend on pre-planning. FEMA helps the nation prepare for disaster by:

- Helping states and localities to plan and prepare for a wide range of hazards;
- Training emergency management professionals and state and local officials at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute;
- Developing courses for state and local delivery and offering training by satellite through the Emergency Education NETWORK (EENET);

FEMA PHOTO BY WILLIAM E. BECKER



Hurricane Floyd flooded many communities in North Carolina.

FEMA PHOTO BY RICK KEMENYAS



Urban fire continues to pose a significant risk in the United States.

- Sponsoring exercises that let people work together under conditions similar to a real disaster;
- Coordinating emergency plans and exercises for nuclear power plants;
- Helping to minimize the risks posed by hazardous materials transport and storage; and
- Creation of K-12 curriculum for schools on disaster/emergency preparedness.

### FEDERAL INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION (FIA)

The FIA, without appropriations, administers the National Flood Insurance Program, which offers federally backed flood insurance coverage to citizens in more than 19,000 participating communities. FEMA helps reduce the impact of flooding and helps flood victims by:

- Providing insurance incentives to reinforce measures to mitigate flood damage;
- Increasing awareness about flood insurance and its benefits and promoting policy sales;
- Working in partnership with the insurance industry to sell and service flood insurance policies; and
- Making claims payments to assist individuals, businesses, and communities to facilitate recovery from flooding.

### UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION (USFA)

In the U.S. each year, fire kills about 4,900 people and injures 28,000 people. Direct property losses due to fire exceed \$9 billion a year and the overall fire cost to the American public is \$159 billion annually. Through the USFA, FEMA helps reduce fire deaths, injuries and damage by:

- Developing new fire management technologies;
- Training the nation's firefighters and emergency medical professionals through the National Fire Academy;
- Educating the public on how to lower fire risk; and
- Working with 30,000 fire departments to collect and analyze national fire statistics.